

**December 17, 2023**

**An Out of this World Christmas: Week 3**

What's so amazing about the Christmas story is how diametrically opposed this incredible story plays out in front of us!

Think about it, the Christmas story introduces us to this amazing event: God leaving HIS world, and coming into OUR world.

Week 1: we discussed His World

Week 2: we revealed the Declaration of Heaven

Today: The Offer of Heaven, the Opportunity to Earth

I. The Offer of Heaven

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

We deal with all kinds of OFFERS in life. We've probably all had an OFFER that sounded too good to be true! And if we're smart, we'll walk away. But you better make sure of the offer!

In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke), they each tell the same story about a rich, young man coming to Jesus inquiring about Eternal Life.

He asked the "Savior": What must I do to be saved?

To understand this scenario more fully, we have to consider a couple of things:

- 1.) The background of the rich, young ruler
- 2.) The purpose of his question
- 3.) And the essence of the Gospel

Matthew 19:16 (NIV)

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

Jesus responded: If you want to enter eternal life, Keep the commandments!

He asks: Which Ones?!

He was quick to reply: I've kept ALL the commandments flawlessly from the time of my birth! And he goes on to state: What else do I Lack?!

I've heard: "Don't take a knife to a gun fight". And I would add: Don't get into a Salvation argument with Jesus!

The young man was obviously religious and sincere in his pursuit of righteousness. His problem was that he considered himself to be faultless concerning the Law. And this is the point that Jesus challenges.

For this guy, it was Money, Stuff, and that gets a lot of people.

Can I be honest with you? Your kids don't NEED all that stuff you're getting them for Christmas! We want to be extravagant, we want them to be in awe, and I get that, I'm a dad.

But remember, it's ALL temporary! Your determined effort is to show them the Eternal! We'll never live it Perfectly! That was Jesus' message to this young man that day. That's why "He" came!

If you want eternal life, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

The young man decided that Jesus was asking too much. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

The Lottery is NOT going to change your life! It can make it better for a while, but the statistics haven't changed. It destroys more lives than it helps! And you're not going to outlast it, you're only going to leave it!

Here's heaven's offer:

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

God made HIM who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in HIM we might become the righteousness of God.

The Christmas story provides a Life Changing Offer!

II. The Opportunity to Earth

This will be a Sign unto you!

God loves you SO much, that He made the most amazing offer, and delivered it in person!

Matthew 14:25-29 (NIV)

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said.

This will always be Jesus' response to you! Your ETERNITY hangs by way of an Invitation. You can Respond or Not Respond. But there's a bit more to the Invitation, it will be marked by either Joy or Sorrow!

There's always a SIGN! But for some of you that are still a bit skeptical, there is another SIGN.

*Mark 14:22 (NIV)*

While they were eating, Jesus took BREAD, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a CUP, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many..."

There won't be many who can say, "I never got the Invitation!"

The Rich Young ruler, and Peter responded to different conclusions! You might get stuck that Peter sank, but you have to understand that first Peter STOOD!

Your failures are not fatal! You're just ONE decision away from your eternal destiny!